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Module: Creative Music Management

BMTY7000

Assignment Title: Element 2, Reflective Summary

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Table of Contents

<u>INTRODUCTION</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>THE ASSIGNMENT</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>TEAM AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>MARKETING PLAN</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>DISTRIBUTION</u>	<u>7</u>
<u>BUDGET</u>	<u>8</u>
<u>CONCLUSION</u>	<u>9</u>

Word count: 2567

Introduction

The following essay discusses and reflects on the process of organising a single release created by the group one bad apple, a group that was designated by Tileyard Education. It will discuss different aspects of the Creative Music Management portfolio and explain the decisions behind them. It will cover and analysis the marketing strategy, distribution and budget elements of the project. I will also evaluate how my team worked together and handled the management of the project, as well as how we delegated tasks between us.

The Assignment

The assignment required us to create a single release campaign for either an original recording or a remix. The first step was to create a song brief, as we decided to create the campaign for an artist who had just released a track, we settled on organising a campaign for a remix. The original was track titled 'Aboard' by the band JollyRoger. For the remix brief we settled on sticking with the original vocal lines and melody of the song and just add certain instrumentation to develop the track further and outside of its original genre. The song brief also contained a list of other characteristics wanted for the remix and a list of reference tracks. We received a medium amount of responses after posting the song brief and settled on the artist Freak Response to create the remix. This choice made the most sense as the band already had a professional relationship with the artist Freak Response, so made the process easier and smoother as both worked well together.

After the track was created it was time to focus on the release plan, for this we had to start by creating a list of assets. These assets involved creating an EPK, press release, a distribution plan, a promo video and other marketing assets. We also had

to organise contracts for the remix and artwork, all while sticking to the allocated budget of £500. The artist creating the remix specified that the genre for the remix instrumentation would lean heavily towards the 90s Breakbeat genre. This allowed us to research the audience demographic of this genre in order to understand who our market was going to be. After researching, we realised that this genre was heavily enjoyed within the modern skate community (Bobowicz, 2020). So, this helped us with our initial direction when creating the assets for the release campaign. However, after much deliberation we decided to move away from this direction as the band JollyRoger decided this would be a one-off remix and it would not be beneficial to expand the bands audience into this demographic. On reflection it may not have been the most beneficial decision to scrap this entirely as the audience for the remix genre may have helped increase streaming numbers. However, after conversations with the artists it was clear that the bands aim was to attract new fans but ones they would be able to retain with their original content in the future.

Team and Project Management

The members of our group One Bad Apple were allocated by Tileyard to work on the project. We had all previously met each other on the course but had not ever worked together before, so this required us to start from scratch when understanding each other's professional skills. At the beginning of the project I decided to expand my knowledge of project management by researching effective project management techniques that are heavily used within the industry. Project manager blog states that the best way to organise a project is by work breakdown structure or WBS, this technique suggests that the best way to organise a group project is to breakdown the project in to parts (Landau, 2019). It also suggests that after tasks are broken down it

is best to “Divide and Conquer” as a team. This would then allow team members to complete tasks that meet their strengths allowing the project to be completed quicker and more efficiently.

When considering on how to breakdown the tasks and workload, as a group we decided to research applications and programs that would allow us to communicate and allocate tasks to each other virtually. On previous projects I had used the app Trello, this allows project teams to assign tasks and create virtual Kanban boards. Allowing project tasks to be split up into 3 categories, often being: to do, doing, and done. However, as a group we decided we would like a similar application but one that came with more organisational features (Thompson, 2021). Through research we discovered the application Asana, which provided a similar service to Trello but with an expansion of features. This allowed us to organise a Timeline and view a list of personal and group tasks. Programs such as Asana have become essential for any business due to the Covid-19 pandemic, as this has forced people to have to work from home more often (Thompson, 2021). This has caused virtual communication to be fundamental as workers are no longer able to communicate within the office. As a group we were faced with similar challenges and were only able to meet up virtually, which at times created some difficulties. To improve our project management, I feel that next time we should develop a more rigid plan when it comes to planning the release and use project planning techniques such as a Gant chart. Implementing timescales and setting due dates would have allowed some members of the team to be more productive and not be overwhelmed by the tasks set. This could have led to better time management and which could of allowed us to explore more ideas regarding the release.

Team Delegation

After discussing elements such as project management it was time to move on to team delegation and allocating the tasks between us. The first step was to understand each other's strength and skills so that the correct tasks were allocated to the most suited individual. To do this we decided to organise a meeting to discuss our past experience within the industry and discuss areas that we wished to challenge ourselves in. One member of our group had spent most of their time in the industry being artists and creative, so we decided they would be best suited to complete creative tasks such as designing an Electronic Press Kit and creating the promo videos. Another member of the group volunteered to take on more of the corporate tasks such as handling the contracts and keeping track of budgets. Due to my past experience I decided to take on the marketing strategy for the track and to handle elements such as the song brief as well as helping other members tie the project together.

To ensure that I delegated to my team successfully, I decided to research ways to understand how us as individuals would best benefit the team's success. Forbes recently reported that one of the ways to ensure a positive employee experience is to understand each other personalities types (Expert Panel, 2021). After completing the 16 personalities test I discovered my personality type was ESFJ otherwise known as the care taker. This allowed me to appreciate that I as an individual am successful in helping others succeed and that I have a natural ability in completing practical and organisational type tasks (Introduction | Consul (ESFJ) Personality, no date).

Another member of my group discovered they were ENFP otherwise known as the campaigner, these individuals are known to be energetic and enthusiastic but lack practical and organisational skills (*Introduction | Campaigner (ENFP) Personality*, no

date). This research supported my decision in taking on the role of organiser for the project, I respected that other members would have lots of great ideas but that some would not be possible to complete with the time scale and budget we were given. I have decided to implement this when completing future projects as accomplishing a smaller number of tasks to a higher standard is sometimes more beneficial, then completing large number of tasks to a lower standard.

Marketing Plan

One of the tasks allocated to me was to organise the marketing strategy for the release. This required me to create a marketing timeline, a digital marketing schedule for the weeks before and after the release and to complete a SWOT analysis for the project. A SWOT analysis allows a company to consider their internal strengths and weaknesses, these are often elements that the company are able to work on and have control over. Using this technique, a company is also able to evaluate their opportunities and threats surrounding a specific product or project. These are normally external and not something anyone can control or change (Parsons, 2021).

Completing this analysis allowed me to create a marketing plan that played to the artists strengths while avoiding their weaknesses. For instance, the band wanted to expand their very loyal fanbase so when creating marketing content I made sure it appealed to their current fanbase as well as the new demographic. When planning I made sure to be aware of the restricted budget which I evaluated as a weakness. I did this by creating content myself instead of hiring outside designers, however when creating merchandise and the promo video we decided to make use of the artwork

which had been created by a professional designer. The SWOT analysis also helped me identify the external threats and opportunities the release posed for the artist.

One of the opportunities I learned was to take advantage of the resurgence of the sea shanty genre due to the success of the Nathan Evans track Wellerman. The track rose to fame due to becoming popular on the social video app TikTok and eventually reached number one in the UK charts (BBC, 2021). This is evidence of how the increasingly popular app TikTok has become extremely useful within music marketing. As it allows artists to create interactive challenges to the sound of their track and becomes less about pushing the music and more about pushing the content. This ultimately opens the music market up to fans who are not necessarily loyal music fans but just listen to what is popular at the time. This research supported my decision in launching the “Aboard” TikTok challenge for the release of the track. The challenge would allow the band to widen their audience reach outside of just their social media followers and would hopefully generate streaming traffic for the single.

Distribution

For distribution we choose to stick to digital distribution such as uploading to streaming platforms and the digital download site Bandcamp. Digital distribution is ultimately the most popular distribution method in 2021 as these platforms have become the main way consumers listen to music (Ingham, 2021). This knowledge and research supported our decision in using digital distributions methods for the release. We decided to use the aggregator Ditto for the release as the artist had already purchased their membership for the year. The track will also be distributed on the artist’s current band camp page. I decided to develop a plan in order to make

the digital download more appealing for fans, in order to generate the most profits possible from this outlet. The artists shared with me that previously they had delayed their upload to DSPs by two to five days in order to sway listeners to purchase the track which would lead to larger profits compared to streaming royalties alone. After discussing details with the featuring artist Freak Response, who created the instrumentation for the remix, I decided this may not be the best decision for this release as his only distribution method was through DSPs. So that's when I started researching merchandise bundles and their effect on the industry. In recent years artists have experienced tremendous success in increasing music sales through the use of merch bundles and pre orders (Rogers, 2020). This research supported my plan in providing merch bundles via Bandcamp, these bundles offer the chance for listeners to purchase the single with a high-quality digital art bundle or a single bundle with physical merch such as a T-shirt and an exclusive facemask. I feel this will be successful in providing the artist with an increase in digital sales which would allow for larger, long-term profits. To improve this for future releases I feel that blockchain technology, specifically NFTs would allow the artist to benefit the most from exclusive digital content sales (Ingham, 2021). As a group we planned to research this for this release but due to a lot of blockchain companies not being available to help distribute the project, we settled on a standard digital release.

Budget

The budget set for the project was £500, this was not massive but suitable for a digital only release. At times we had conversations as a group about different ideas regarding the release but felt we had to reign them in due to budget restrictions. Ideas ranged from organising a professional videographer to shoot a music video to creating more extravagant merchandise such as a skateboard deck and arranging a

USB or tape release. This led to me researching the benefits and logistics of crowdfunding sites such as Kickstarter. Crowdfunding has shown to be successful in recent years as a way for artists to receive advanced payments in order to create a product (Musicians Union, 2020). I felt crowdfunding would be the most beneficial way in raising substantial funds to create a music video for the track. It would also provide fans with exclusive rewards for their donations depending on the amount donated a different reward would be provided. This technique would allow the artists to raise the funds they would need in order to be creative, while providing fans and listeners with creative content to enjoy. This is a reason why crowd funding is popular amongst independent artists who have no financial backing from a record label. However, after we decided to no longer have the skate community as our target audience for the release, we had to change our original ideas for the professional video. After this change we decided it was best to save the video for a later date when we had real life data and had saw how popular the track was with fans and listeners. I believe crowdfunding would be beneficial for use in the future as a way to expand the artists budget on larger projects.

Conclusion

Overall, I feel that our project was successful as we were able to create a substantial amount of content and assets to ensure the project was success. One part I feel was successful is that we were able to work well as a team and balance our personalities well to be as productive as possible. I also feel that our addition of preliminary contracts into our portfolio allows are project to be lifted to the next level. As even though these were not essential to the portfolio it prevents any future disputes around royalty shares and copyright. One way I feel we could have improved was to be able to manage our time better and balance this project more with other

commitments. This is definitely something we should all consider on our next stages in our personal and professional development and when completing future projects. Next time I also feel it would be beneficial to push our distribution strategy to the next level and consider new emerging technology more.

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